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The Governing Boards

The education reform is in full swing. One of its cornerstones, namely, school administration based on a partnership approach, will be in place in September 1998 with the establishment of the governing boards, whose duties and powers are defined in the *Education Act*.

The governing boards will bring together parents, school staff (including the principal) and community representatives. The success of the education reform is contingent upon the ability of the boards to work together while recognizing the respective roles of the various partners involved in the school and pursuing the central goal of the reform, which is to promote student success. Training will be provided to the governing boards in order to help them get a start in the right direction. The training sessions are the result of joint efforts by the Ministère de l'Éducation and organizations whose members will be sitting on the governing boards.

Training Plan

The training is designed to achieve three goals: (1) to meet the requests for training needs expressed by members of the school community at the hearings of the parliamentary committee on Bill 180 and recently reiterated by numerous partners in education; (2) to give all governing board members access to the same information; (3) to equip the governing boards with tools and resources that will help them to fulfil their function efficiently.

In order to meet these objectives, the training plan is divided into three parts. The first part will consist in **delivering the same message to all governing board members**. The message will be approved at the provincial level by organizations with some member representatives on the boards. This message will focus on the central goal of the reform, on key aspects of the *Education Act* relating to the governing boards, on the partnership necessary to implement such a reform, and on the responsibilities of the boards and of each of their members. It is hoped that, by hearing the same message, members of each governing board will share a common vision of the goal to be attained, of the work to be accomplished, of their respective roles and of the spirit in which all efforts must be directed in order to maximize chances of achieving the desired results. In other words, the governing board members must realize that they are facing the same challenge, which is to promote the

success of the greatest possible number of students in their school, and that they will be able to meet this challenge only if they are willing to work together toward the same goal.

The second part of the training plan will focus on **providing the governing boards with useful tools and resources**. Once these tools have been assessed and identified, they will be made available to the governing boards. They will be varied, ranging from reference documents (policy statements, plans of action, etc.) to other more technical materials (such as guidelines for conducting meetings and writing minutes), and their purpose will be to provide the boards with the appropriate support to fulfil their mandate.

The third component of the training plan will be aimed at **creating a communication network** among the individual governing boards and between the governing boards and the Ministère. The boards will thus be able to help and support each other, pool their information and share their experiences. As was the case during the process leading up to the establishment of the linguistic school boards, the governing boards will also be able to query the Ministère in order to clarify certain aspects of their role. The Ministère will set up a mechanism to make sure that the governing boards get answers to their questions as quickly as possible and that all governing boards have access to the corpus of questions and answers.

Delivery

The training will be delivered in two ways. First, **local training sessions** will be offered to the governing boards through the Ministère's regional offices. The goal of these sessions will be to convey the message discussed above. The form and nature of the sessions may vary from region to region, but their content will be the same. It should be possible to organize these sessions as soon as the governing boards are established. A timetable will be drawn up in each region and made public at the beginning of the school year.

Second, **an Internet site will be created especially for the governing boards**. Through this site, the boards will be able to communicate with each other and with the Ministère. In keeping with the third part of the training plan, the governing boards will thus become resources for each other. The site will also give them access to the abovementioned reference documents and technical tools, and will post the content of the training session to be offered by the regional offices.



Although still under construction, the site may be accessed at the following address: <http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/conseils>. The content of the training session and certain reference documents will be the first items to be posted on the site, which will be inaugurated in mid-September and updated and expanded throughout the year.

Third, **a CD-ROM will be produced.** This CD-ROM will contain a portion of the information and documents

posted on the Internet site (content of the training session, reference documents and so on). Its purpose will be to make the information available to as many governing boards as possible, particularly to those who do not have ready access to the Internet.

Spotlight on Partnership

The goal of the above training plan is to encourage strong, productive partnerships within the governing

boards so that they may work as effectively as possible toward the success of the greatest possible number of students. The training plan itself is the outcome of such a partnership—coordinated by the Ministère, it is supported, validated and monitored by the provincial organizations most directly concerned by the work of the governing boards. A promising beginning!



The purpose of *Education Reform Update* is to keep readers up-to-date on the progress of the reform set out in *A New Direction for Success: Ministerial Plan of Action for the Reform of the Education System*. The newsletter is published by the communications branch of the ministère de l'Éducation, in cooperation with the office of the Deputy Minister of Education.

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